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CGT GUIDE

Types of Property Valuation Explained: Desktop, Full Inspection, Commercial & Agribusiness



Every valuation follows the same evidence-based process — but which one you need depends on your property and your purpose. Here's what separates each type.

If you've never ordered a property valuation before, the range of options can be confusing — desktop, full inspection, commercial, agribusiness, and more. The right one depends on two things: what kind of property you have, and what you need the valuation for. Getting this wrong can mean paying for more than you need, or worse, ending up with a report that isn't accepted for the purpose you needed it for.

At a glance

Product	Property type	Inspection	Typically used for
 Desktop Value Assessment	Residential	No physical inspection	A quick, indicative view of value — not suitable for CGT, tax, SMSF or legal purposes
 Full Inspection Valuation	Residential	Physical inspection	CGT, mortgage security, family law, and other formal purposes
 Commercial Valuation	Office, retail, industrial & specialised assets	Physical inspection	CGT, financial reporting, disputes, and higher-value or income-producing assets
 Agribusiness Valuation	Rural, farming & agribusiness land	Physical inspection (land & improvements)	Rural finance, succession planning, tax and SMSF, compensation claims

Desktop Value Assessment

An accredited residential valuer assesses your property using available property information, comparable sales and local market evidence, then prepares a report without physically inspecting the property.

- Prepared by an accredited residential valuer without a physical inspection
- Based on available property information and relevant market evidence
- Written report setting out an indicative value opinion, assumptions and limitations

Because there's no inspection, a Desktop Value Assessment is faster and lower cost than a Full Inspection Valuation — but it can only reflect what's visible in public records and available data. Renovations, defects, or improvements that haven't been formally recorded won't be captured, and it's generally not suitable for CGT, tax, SMSF or other formal legal purposes, where independent, inspected evidence is expected.

Full Inspection Valuation

An accredited residential valuer physically inspects your property and prepares a detailed valuation report supported by local market evidence.

- Physical inspection by an accredited residential valuer
- Assessment of the property and relevant market evidence as at the agreed valuation date
- Valuation report setting out the valuer's opinion, reasoning, assumptions and limitations

The inspection is what sets this apart: the valuer verifies the property's actual condition, layout and improvements in person, rather than relying on what's publicly recorded. This is the standard generally expected for CGT, mortgage security, family law, and other matters where the report needs to hold up to scrutiny.



Commercial Valuation

An accredited commercial specialist valuer physically inspects your property and prepares a detailed valuation report tailored to the asset and its purpose.

- Physical inspection by an accredited commercial specialist valuer
- Assessment of the asset and relevant market evidence as at the agreed valuation date
- Valuation report tailored to the agreed purpose, with reasoning, assumptions and limitations

Commercial assets — office, retail, industrial, and specialised properties like childcare or hospitality venues — are valued differently to residential property, since income, lease terms, tenant strength and asset-specific factors typically drive value more than comparable sales alone. A commercial specialist valuer brings the sector-specific expertise this requires.

Agribusiness Valuation

An accredited agribusiness specialist valuer physically inspects your property, including its land and improvements, and prepares a detailed valuation report tailored to the asset and its purpose.

- Physical inspection by an accredited agribusiness specialist valuer
- Assessment of the land, improvements and relevant market evidence as at the agreed valuation date
- Valuation report tailored to the agreed purpose, with reasoning, assumptions and limitations

Rural and agribusiness property is valued against its productive capacity — carrying capacity, crop yields, water entitlements and improvements — benchmarked against regional sales and district conditions, rather than residential-style comparable sales. This makes specialist rural valuation experience essential to an accurate, defensible figure.

How to choose the right valuation type

Start with the property type, then the purpose:

- Residential property, informal purpose (a general sense of value, preliminary planning) → Desktop Value Assessment
- Residential property, formal purpose (CGT, mortgage security, legal matters) → Full Inspection Valuation
- Office, retail, industrial or specialised asset → Commercial Valuation
- Farming, rural or agribusiness land → Agribusiness Valuation

If you're not sure which applies to your situation, it's worth checking with your valuer or your accountant before ordering — the wrong product can mean redoing the valuation later, which costs more time and money than getting it right the first time.

FAQs

What's the difference between a desktop assessment and a full inspection?

A desktop assessment is prepared without visiting the property, using available data and comparable sales, while a full inspection involves an accredited valuer physically assessing the property's condition and improvements in person. The inspection is what makes a full valuation suitable for formal purposes like CGT, where a desktop assessment generally isn't accepted.

Can I use a desktop valuation for CGT or tax purposes?

Generally, no. A Desktop Value Assessment is intended as an indicative estimate, not a formal report suitable for CGT, SMSF, or other tax and legal purposes, since it isn't based on a physical inspection. For these purposes, a Full Inspection Valuation (or the equivalent Commercial or Agribusiness valuation) is the correct product.

How do I know if my property needs a residential, commercial, or agribusiness valuation?

It generally follows the property's actual use: a house, apartment or townhouse is valued as residential; an office, retail, or industrial asset is valued as commercial; and farming or rural land is valued as agribusiness. A mixed-use or unusual property may need a conversation with a valuer to confirm the right category.

Does a commercial or agribusiness valuation cost more than a residential one?

Generally, yes — commercial and agribusiness valuations typically involve more specialised analysis, such as lease terms, income evidence, or productive capacity, which takes more time than a standard residential assessment. The exact cost depends on the asset's size, complexity and purpose, so it's best confirmed with a quote.

What does "accredited valuer" mean?

It generally refers to a property valuation professional who holds the relevant qualifications and industry accreditation for the type of asset being valued — residential, commercial, or agribusiness. Using a suitably accredited, independent valuer is part of what makes a valuation report defensible for formal purposes.

Can I upgrade from a desktop assessment to a full inspection later?

Generally, yes, though this usually means commissioning a new report rather than adding an inspection to the existing one. If you're unsure which level of assessment you need, it's often worth checking with your valuer before ordering, so you get the right product the first time.

Note: General information only. This does not constitute financial, legal or taxation advice. Product suitability depends on your specific property and purpose — your local valuer can help confirm the right option before you order.